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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Tuesday, July 11, 1944

QUESTION BOX:

How keep garden going?
What to plant to store?
When to pick okra?

ANSWERS FROM:

Garden specialists of the
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Did somebody say that July is vacation time? I'd just like to show that speaker this pile of questions from the V-Gardeners on the job. One look should convince them. But maybe, on second thought, he is right. It's always vacation time for Victory gardeners if you mean getting plenty of fresh air, good exercise, new adventure, and if you like a sporting thought they get a chance for lively competition, what with weeds and bugs lurking around. Not a rocking-chair vacation, certainly, but one with enjoyment unlimited. And look what it can do for the dinner table.

Now maybe you'd like to know what caused that outburst. It's the question on the top of the pile. I think you might have one just like it in your mind. Writes the lady: "We enjoyed our early spring vegetables so much they are completely cleaned out. I just can't bear to look at that vacant spot in the garden. Could you suggest how I might put it to use for the rest of the season?

Indeed we can and congratulations on the thrifty thought. This is a time to plant for a bountiful supply of leafy greens for early fall. For late fall, too, if you use the old-timer's practice of "cut and come again" - cut the outside leaves as soon as they are ready to use, and leave the inner leaves on to grow so you can "come again."

If you didn't use all of your seeds when you planted your spring greens, go right ahead and sow them for the fall crop - kale, endive, mustard, and the like.

But why not try some new kinds to give variety? Have you tried collards? They are easy to grow, and are somewhat different in texture from many of the thin-leaved greens we associate with Spring. They are attractive looking, too, shading from dark green to stems that are quite light. And the nutrition experts give them a very good rating.

Another member of the leafy green group that you might get acquainted with if you aren't already old friends, is turnip greens. Where they are known, they are almost a tradition. You can practically guess where people come from, - in case they weren't born where you meet them, - by their answer to the question, do you eat turnip-greens? At least that was true, but times are changing and before long I predict these standbuys will have staunch friends everywhere.

And don't forget to try some Chinese cabbage if you haven't grown it before. You'll like its crinkly leaf and pleasant flavor. It is a willing grower, too, and that makes it a welcome addition to any garden.

Here is another question that comes just in the nick of time. It comes from a suburban dweller whose husband has built her a small vegetable storage compartment in their basement. She wonders if it is too late to plant something in the garden for storage. Fortunate V-gardener she is, indeed, to have both the storage space and still time to grow vegetables to fill it. This is a first-class time in most parts of the country to plant for winter use. Carrots by all means,; turnips, the dependable, and surely some beets to brighten the winter menu. Seeds for these could be planted right away and the roots should be ready for storing before heavy frosts come. I'd like to suggest, too, some winter radishes. They are as crisp as their spring relatives and may be stored for use over quite a long season. Ask for winter radish seed when you make your purchase.

We have time for just one more question. This comes from a gardener who is growing okra for the first time. Her plants are forming pods and she wants to know just the right time and manner of picking in order to treasure the most goodness. Most experienced growers of okra consider the pods are best when between two and three inches long. And be sure to leave a short piece of stem on each when you cut it, and cook it.

Well, question time is over but there's still time to say all good wishes to all you thrifty Victory Gardeners who are determined that every bit of good garden soil they have shall produce to the utmost, right up to the advance of old Jack Frost. You're doing a grand job, producing food in amazing quantity that will release commercial stocks to our armed forces, our allies, and those industrial workers who have no opportunity to grow gardens. You're really growing Victory in a garden.

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